



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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1 February 2012

**NPL103945.E**

Nepal: Machine-readable passports, including whether previously issued passports are still valid; requirements and procedures to obtain them, processing times, and sample copies

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

### 1. Types of Passports and Validity Periods

Sources indicate that machine-readable passports were introduced in Nepal in 2010 (Nepal 4 Jan. 2012; Xinhua 26 Dec. 2010; *República* 13 Dec. 2010). Prior to 2011, the Government of Nepal issued handwritten passports (Nepal 24 Jan. 2012; Canada 25 Jan. 2012). The handwritten passports will reportedly remain valid until November 2015 (*ibid.*; *República* 13 Dec. 2010). According to the Second Secretary at the Embassy of Nepal in Ottawa, passports issued before 2002 were valid for five years and those issued after 2002 are valid for ten years (Nepal 24 Jan. 2012). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 4 January 2012, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Nepal in Washington, DC, said that temporary handwritten passports, valid for six months, can still be issued, usually in the case of urgent travel, if applicants are waiting to receive their machine-readable passport.

The Government of Nepal also issues a travel document with a black cover (Canada 25 Jan. 2012; Nepal 24 Jan. 2012), which, according to the Nepalese embassy's second secretary in Ottawa, is issued to refugees in Nepal and Nepalese citizens abroad who have lost their regular passports (*ibid.*). Ordinary Nepalese passports have a green cover, while diplomatic passports are red and passports for high-ranking government officials are blue (*ibid.*; Canada 25 Jan. 2012). A consular officer at the Embassy of Canada to Nepal stated in correspondence with the Research Directorate that the ordinary Nepalese passport contains 60 pages (*ibid.*). Samples of the data and signature pages of the machine-readable and handwritten passports are attached to this Response.

### 2. Procedures to Obtain Passports

The Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington stated that the issuance of machine-readable passports is centrally administered and controlled by the Central Passport Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Nepal 4 Jan. 2012). He also explained that applications can be made at the District Administrative Office in each of the 75 administrative districts of Nepal and at Nepalese embassies abroad; these offices collect the passport applications on behalf of the Central

Passport Office and distribute the passports when they are ready (ibid.).

Passport applications can be downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Central Passport Office (Nepal n.d.c). The website also provides instructions on how to print and complete the application form (in English and Nepalese), as well as samples of applications that have been correctly and incorrectly filled out (for a copy of the application form, see the attachment to this Response) (ibid.). In December 2010, the *Himalayan Times* stated that it takes six to eight weeks to receive the passport through the regular process, or one week through a "fast track" process (26 Dec. 2010). The Deputy Chief of Mission confirmed that, if in Nepal, an applicant can obtain an urgently required passport within one week, and also said that regular passports can generally be obtained within four to six weeks (23 Jan. 2012).

According to the website of the Embassy of Nepal in Ottawa, in order to apply for a passport, Nepalese citizens in Canada are generally required to make the request in person at the Embassy, but may also apply by mail (Nepal n.d.b). Applicants require the following documents: two copies of the completed application form; four copies of a photograph; and their old passport (ibid.). The website also states that if applying to replace a lost passport, an applicant must submit, in addition to the application forms and photographs, a police report from the country of residence and an original citizenship certificate or a copy of the lost passport, which would be verified by the Embassy with the issuing authorities in Nepal (ibid.). The website does not list the fees charged for these services (ibid.).

According to the website of the Embassy of Nepal in Washington, applicants for a new passport in the United States require two copies of the completed application form; an original Nepalese citizenship certificate or a current Nepalese passport; original birth and marriage certificates, "where applicable"; and three copies of a colour photograph taken in the past six months (Nepal n.d.a). The website also lists the application fees charged for documents: US\$150 for passports, US\$40 for travel documents, and US\$20 for temporary passports (ibid.). The Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Nepal in Washington indicated that it generally takes eight to ten weeks to receive a passport when the application is made through the embassy in Washington (23 Jan. 2012).

According to the Kathmandu-based, English-language newspaper *República*, applicants for a machine-readable passport in Nepal require two copies of the completed application form; a copy of the applicant's citizenship certificate; two copies of a colour photograph taken within the past six months; and the passport fee (13 Dec. 2010). Sources state that the fee for obtaining a machine-readable passport is 5,000 Nepalese rupees (NPR) (*República* 13 Dec. 2010; *The Himalayan Times* 26 Dec. 2010), about 63 CAD (XE 20 Jan. 2012a). However, the Canadian consular officer stated that the passport costs 10,000 NPR (25 Jan. 2012), or 126 CAD (XE 20 Jan. 2012b). *República* also indicates that it costs 10,000 NPR for a "fast service" passport or a replacement passport (13 Dec. 2010).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

## References

Canada. 25 January 2012. Embassy of Canada to Nepal. Correspondence from a consular officer to the Research Directorate.

*The Himalyan Times* [Kathmandu]. 26 December 2010. "MRP to Be Costlier for Migrant Workers." <<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/rssReference.php?headline=MRP+to+be+costlier+for+migrant+workers+&NewsID=270476>> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2012]

Nepal. 24 January 2012. Embassy of Nepal in Ottawa. Correspondence from the Second Secretary to the Research Directorate.

\_\_\_\_\_. 23 January 2012. Embassy of Nepal in Washington, DC. Telephone interview with the Deputy Chief of Mission.

\_\_\_\_\_. 4 January 2012. Embassy of Nepal in Washington, DC. Telephone interview with and correspondence from the Deputy Chief of Mission to the Research Directorate.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.a. Embassy of Nepal, Washington DC. "Passport." <<http://www.nepalembassyusa.org/passport.php>> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2012]

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*República* [Kathmandu]. 13 December 2010. Kosh Raj Koirala. "MRP Issuance to Begin Dec 26." <[http://archives.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=26129](http://archives.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=26129)> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2012]

XE. 20 January 2012a. "Currency Converter Widget." <<http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert/?Amount=5000&From=NPR&To=CAD>> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2012]

\_\_\_\_\_. 20 January 2012b. "Currency Converter Widget." <<http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert/?Amount=10000&From=NPR&To=CAD>> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2012]

Xinhua News Agency. 26 December 2010. "Nepal to Distribute Machine Readable Passport." <[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-12/26/c\\_13665045.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-12/26/c_13665045.htm)> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2012]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, Factiva, *Nepal Business Times*, *Nepal Mountain News*, *Qatar Tribune*.

## Attachments

Nepal. N.d.a. Machine-readable passport specimen. Document sent to the Research Directorate by the Embassy of Nepal in Canada, 16 January 2012.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.b. Nepal handwritten passport specimen. Document sent to the Research Directorate by a representative of Canada Border Services Agency, 20 January 2012.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.c. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Passport Application Form*.  
<<http://www.cpo.gov.np/pdf/Rightly%20filled%20in%20MRP%20form.pdf>>  
[Accessed 20 Jan. 2012]

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